

Overview

The Town Fire Warden System was established in 1904 to give the responsibility of forest fire prevention and suppression to each individual town under the authority of a town Forest Fire Warden. Forest Fire Wardens are appointed by the Commissioner of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, with the approval of the town Selectboard, and serve a 5-year term or the balance of any former warden's term, with an unlimited number of reappointments possible (subject to approval by the Commissioner or designee, see [Title 10 VSA Chapter 83 §2641](#)).

Numerous wardens are directly in charge of fire suppression in their town, however, it is an accepted practice that most towns designate their town fire department to engage in fire suppression. When a fire department receives a wildland fire call, regardless of the caller, the fire department is considered officially summoned by the town forest fire warden. It is also recognized that town fire wardens often delegate some of their authority to fire department chiefs so that fire suppression efforts are more responsive. Ultimately, town forest fire wardens have complete authority and jurisdiction over wildland fire suppression activities in their towns.

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